

Roxbury, March 31, 1873.

Dear friend May:

You have reason to know my aversion to the use of pen and ink, for I owe you many a letter of affection and gratitude, which remains unwritten in consequence of it. You will therefore excuse me for substituting a pencil in the present instance, as it will enable me to communicate more with much less fatigue.

First, as to domestic affairs. Since you were here, my dear wife has been so seriously indisposed as to make us all extremely anxious as to the result. The dropsical swellings were really alarming. Dr. Hayer, by a careful examination, found that the water had invaded the chest, and threatened an overflow of the heart. Her sufferings were very acute, and she could not remain long in a horizontal position without feeling as if she should suffocate. I wrote to Fanny to be prepared for the worst. On communicating

her case to her venerable relative at Paterson, N. J., John Benson, Esq., he sent a recipe to check the dropsical tendency, saying he had known it to effect a cure when all other means had failed, and wishing us to give it a trial. We did so, and it worked like a charm, causing the swellings to subside, giving immense relief, and in fact speedily allaying our fears ^{to} any fatal termination. It was composed of the following ingredients: half a pint of pure Holland gin, half a pint of water, and half a pint of cranberries thoroughly crushed, (or any larger quantity in the same proportion,) all commingled, and allowed to gently simmer (not boiled, as otherwise the alcohol would evaporate) in a close covered vessel on the range; then all decanted into a bottle, and kept for use three or four times a day, a table spoonful at a time. It enabled wife to enjoy her sleep as formerly, to break from her chamber confinement and sit once more at her accustomed window below stairs,

and to enjoy the company of her friends. Excepting now and then some sharp pains in her right side and shoulder, (doubtless proceeding from the liver,) she is now quite herself again. All we had occasion to use was a pint of each ingredient as already specified.

What with my own complicated ailments—catarrhal, spinal, hemorrhoidal, &c.—and anxious night watchings constantly interrupting my sleep—I was very miserable during this protracted prostration on her part, and could do very little in the way of reading or writing. With her convalescence I have somewhat improved, as she no longer draws upon my sympathies nor requires my vigilant attention; but my difficulties essentially remain, and I am far from being in proper physical or mental tune. Indeed, for nearly three weeks I have been confined to my house by an unexpected impediment, having sprained my right knee, causing much pain, and making locomotion difficult.

Dr. Botting says I must have patience, keep within doors, and let time effect a cure. I have tried wet bandages, various liniments, &c., but to no purpose. As soon, however, as there is dry walking, I shall be disposed to "break jail," and hope it will not end in prolonging my incarceration. I am half inclined to think it is not a sprain, but a violent rheumatic attack.

I was glad to see, by the Christian Register, that you were at the funeral of the Rev. Dr. Allen, of Northboro', and that you bore a merited tribute to the memory of that good man. Whoever connected with the ministry had the moral courage to espouse the Anti-Slavery cause when it cost something, and remained true to the end, deserves to be honorably and gratefully remembered at his burial. But who of the new generation can realize anything of the trials which attended the faithful minister in those dark and evil days?

I have not yet seen the printed memoir of our beloved S. J. M., but am waiting for an opportunity to purchase a number of copies for presentation to friends at home and abroad. I am hoping that its sale will outrun all anticipations.

Charlotte Coffin informs us, to our regret, that Joseph May has been compelled to go to Fayal, on account of the debilitated state of his health. May the result be a complete recuperation!

Doubtless, you have been apprised of the death of our estimable Irish friend and coadjutor James Haughton, at Dublin. He and dear R. D. W. were very closely united in their lives, and in their deaths they were not long divided. As I turn over the files of the Liberator, and see how many letters they wrote to help the Anti-Slavery cause along, — to say nothing of their untiring labors at home, or of the voluminous correspondence of R. D. W. in the A. S.

Standard, — I am more than ever impressed with the value of their co-operation, and the eminent service they rendered the struggle to give liberty to the oppressed in our land. They were singularly unlike each other as to their exterior appearance, tastes, and mental characteristics, but in the work of philanthropy they "mingled like kindred drops into one." Blessings on their memories! However distant may be the spheres they now occupy, my heart goes out to them, finding no barrier between, and no intervening space. I have written an article concerning them, "In Memoriam," for the Christian Union, though it may not have been received in season for this week's number. I have also sent to Samuel Haughton, 35 Eccles Street, Dublin, a warm tribute to the memory of his noble father, which possibly may be printed there.

So, one after another of "the sacramental host of God's elect" for the deliverance of a doomed race is called hence, and at no distant day they will all have been "gathered to their fathers." In this there is no cause for lamentation ~~and~~^{or} regret, for the translation cannot be for evil but for good. It is true, in view of the miseries yet to be assuaged, the wrongs to be redressed, and the sins to be overcome, one may be pardoned, in view of such bereavements, in exclaiming with the Psalmist, "Help, Lord! for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men." But as not a particle of matter, however disintegrated or changed, is lost in the material universe; so there is ^{no} form of goodness, however evanescent, that is not still existent; and, therefore, in an essential sense, there can be no loss or bereavement, but only modes of operation and different spheres of activity.

I was very deeply touched on receiving the letter, signed by my dear friend Edmund Quincy, yourself, and others, urging me to write my anti-slavery autobiography. I felt great embarrassment in replying to it. I suppose you have already seen the answer I sent, as the correspondence has been published in several journals. How I may succeed in writing anything worth printing remains to be seen. Unfortunately, my memory of the events and incidents of life is like a sieve which can hold no water; and as I have never attempted to keep a diary, I have nothing of the kind to recall what is now a blank. But this shall not deter me from trying; and it may be that, as I concentrate my mind upon the work, I shall be able to remember much that now seems lost forever. Much will depend on the state of my health.

I do not know whether you took any special interest in the matter of Mr. Sumner and the resolutions of censure adopted at the special session of the Legislature last November, on account of his proposition in regard to the national battle-flags. I certainly deemed the adoption of those resolutions premature, and by implication unjust to Mr. Sumner, who could not ^{have} intended to wound the feelings of the loyal soldiers. At the same time, when our friend Whittier and others asked the present Legislature to expunge or rescind those resolutions, it was not wisely dividing the question, but virtually asking for an approval of Mr. Sumner's course, and not simply an exoneration of his motives. The vote in both Houses was surprisingly large against meddling with the record of the previous session; especially in view of the strenuous efforts made by Ex-Govs. Wash-

burn and Claflin, James Freeman Clarke, E. L. Pierce, and others, to influence the Judiciary Committee to report in favor of rescinding. I felt impelled to criticize some of the views they presented, yet giving no approval of the obnoxious resolutions, and taking care to shield Mr. Sumner from the charge of wantonly intending to insult the loyal soldiers; but my remarks were not only bunglingly reported, but I ^{was} made to say that I thought Mr. Sumner was deservedly censured, and that the censure ought to stand! Of course, I sent a correction at once to the Daily Journal. During his remarks, Edward L. Pierce grossly misrepresented my position, and attacked me in a very sneering and insolent manner; much to the gratification of a certain portion of the assembly present, including, of course, all the Copperheads and Greeleyites.

This overwhelming vote of the Legislature makes it worse for Mr. Sumner than though the question of rescinding had not been forced upon its attention; and it shows, in a very striking light, how completely he has lost his hold upon the popular sentiment of Massachusetts, in consequence of his extraordinary conduct during the last Presidential campaign, his chief supporters and eulogists having been at that time Copperheads and Rebels. You will remember, perhaps, that in his wonderful catholicity towards the latter, he argued that President Grant should not be re-elected because he had put down the rebellion, and the sight of him would be equivalent to a vindictive and defiant battle-flag to the South! This fact it was that caused so much feeling when he made his motion in the Senate for purging the other battle-flags.

This Legislature has behaved very shabbily on the Woman Suffrage question. The conduct of those Republican members who spoke and voted in the negative, judging from the standpoint of the State Republican Convention last fall, is a pretty bald piece of party perfidy.

We continue to get pleasant letters from our daughter at Heidelberg. Her three littler ones are all developing finely, and enjoying themselves greatly with the little German children. She is acquiring a good knowledge of the French as well as of the German language. Mr. Villard is in somewhat better health.

Hoping all is going well with you and yours, and sending my most affectionate regards (and wife's) to you all, I remain, gratefully and lovingly

Yours to the heart's core,

Wm. Lloyd Garrison.
Samuel May.